



**M O N T A N A
C O A L I T I O N A G A I N S T
D O M E S T I C A N D S E X U A L
V I O L E N C E**

TO: House Appropriations Committee
FROM: Jennifer Hill-Hart, Policy Assistant
Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
DATE: March 16, 2007
RE: HB 638 - State funding for family planning

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the House Appropriations Committee. My name is Jennifer Hill-Hart and I represent the Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. We support HB 638.

Title X clinics play an important role in identifying and supporting victims of domestic violence in families. More than 80% of clinicians in Title X-supported clinics indicate that domestic violence is a common problem affecting their clinic's client population. In 2000, the Office of Population Affairs (OPA) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) began a collaboration to address domestic violence through Title X family planning clinics. Providing reproductive health services to almost 5 million women each year (many of whom because of age and economic status are at greater risk of victimization), Title X clinics play a key role in identifying and assisting victims of domestic violence. As a result, OPA compiled a resource guide of materials and training information on domestic violence for Title X grantees, delegates, and clinics that includes staff education and training, clinic protocols and policies, screening and response strategies, clinic environment, and referral.

Many survivors of domestic and sexual violence who are in the transition of leaving violent homes lack adequate health care coverage due to sudden change in economic status and/or loss of insurance upon leaving the an abusive relationship. In addition, the need for the reproductive health services provided by publicly funded family planning clinics remains crucial for many low-income women, especially those who are uninsured. Even women who have some type of health care coverage continue to seek care at family planning clinics—whether or not those clinics are participating in managed care networks—because their plans do not cover the contraceptives they want or because of concerns about confidentiality.

It is difficult for some providers to absorb the additional costs not covered by federal funds without cutting back on their patient populations. Others are forced to forgo routine testing and to base treatment on examinations alone and some must change the nature of their services, by requiring fees or taking a higher proportion of clients who can afford to pay. HB 638 not only alleviates these financial woes, but some studies indicate that for every dollar invested in Title X clinics, as much as three dollars is saved from being spent through Medicaid.

Title X not only provide necessary health care services to Montanans, but in particular, serve as an excellent tool to identify and assist victims of domestic violence during and after they leave violent homes. Please support HB 638 and support survivors of domestic violence.

Thank you.

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HB 638